At the Parting of the Ways.

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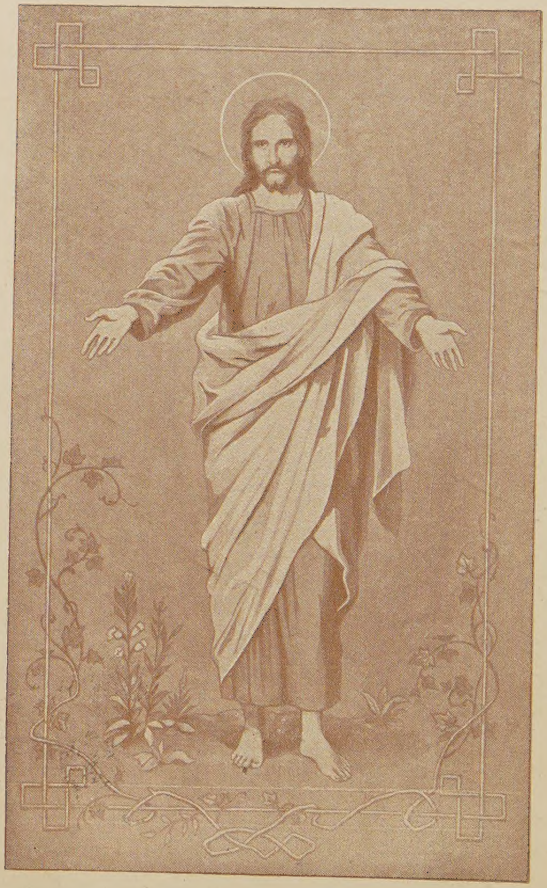

Come unto Me!

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At the Parting of the Ways.

In Remembrance
of the
Day of Confirmation.

Translated from the latest American edition of Ziethe's "Confirmanden Büchlein".

BY

REV. HUGO W. HOFFMANN, M.A., Ph.D.

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"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. 2, 10.

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In Remembrance

of the

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Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

I.

At the Parting of the Ways.

MY DEAR FRIEND: A young traveler stands at the parting of the ways. He purposes to go out into the wide, wide world, where his foot has never trod and which his eye has never seen. A small part of the way already lies behind him, and now he stands before a waymark. Once more he turns and looks back upon the beloved place of his birth, upon the dear house of his father. In his heart he recalls all the dear ones, whom he has left at home, and silently he thanks them for all the love and devotion which they have shown him until now, and then with light and cheerful heart he proceeds upon his way.

And you also, my dear friend, now stand at a parting of the ways. The years of your childhood lie behind you. I come to you to-day as a true friend, and in sincere affection for you would advise you how it may be well with you in time and eternity. "A word spoken in due season, how good is it" (Prov. 15, 23). Listen

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then with an earnest and friendly heart to what I shall have to say to you and to advise for your good.

Look around you, my dear friend. Look back upon the years of your life through which you have passed. You are under great obligations to your God for all He has done for you even to this very day. He gave you life out of His fatherly love and mercy. He gave you your body and soul, with all your limbs and senses, your reason and all the faculties of your mind. He has preserved you in health and happiness to this day. He has watched over your body and soul with a father's care. You have a home in which you have daily and abundantly experienced love and devotion. You have to this day satisfied yourself at the table of your God. He has given you your raiment and food, and has daily provided you abundantly with all the necessaries of life. He has granted you many pleasures and shown you many favors, so that, by His grace, you have spent many happy and joyous days. He has preserved and protected you from many dangers. How many a poor person, during this same time, has had to pass through much cross and suffering, through much distress and danger! But God has protected you from all danger, preserved and guarded you against all evil. Many a time you have lain down in peace to sleep under His care and protection, and by His power and grace risen again refreshed and invigorated. My dear friend, have you ever from all your heart thanked Him for these things? Fold your hands and with all your heart say in the words of King David: "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psalm 8, 4). Acknowledge with Jacob: "Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant." (Gen. 32, 10). Confess with your Smaller Catechism: "For all of which I am

in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey Him. This is most certainly true!"

But this is not all, by far. You were born of christian parents, right in the midst of the holy christian church. You are not a poor, wretched heathen child. You have been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. My dear friend, what great grace has not God given you in your baptism! The pious King Louis IX., of France, used to say: "The three handfuls of water with which I once was sprinkled, are more precious than the crown of royalty, which I now wear upon my head." Another pious man called the day of his baptism "the happiest day of his whole life." And you will also say this, if you will remember how immeasurably great and rich is the grace of baptism, which the Triune God has bestowed upon you, and of which you may ever be assured if you walk in daily repentance and faith. For in your baptism your heavenly Father, for the sake of the precious blood of Christ, forgave you all your hereditary and actual sins, and conferred upon you the right to be called His child. Indeed He bestowed upon you "all things" (1 Cor. 3, 21), and for a testimony thereof gave you a "new name" (Rev. 2, 17). You have reason to cry out with the Apostle: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3, 1). In your baptism the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, received you as His own and most intimately united Himself with you, and bestowed upon you His righteousness and His merit. For which reason you can rejoice and sing:

Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Through your baptism you are a member of the body of Christ, of His holy church, and are eternally redeemed from the most dreadful enemies of man, from the power and fear of death. In the very face of death you can triumphantly sing: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15, 54, 55). And so also you are now delivered from all power and rule of Satan, and with the Apostle can thank and praise God: "God hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1, 13). In your baptism the Holy Ghost entered into your poor heart and regenerated you to a new life, in order to gloriously renew you after the image of the Son of God, and it is His purpose to abide within you as your true almighty Comforter, Teacher, Helper and Guide. To this end He has worked faith within you, and with this precious gem would bestow upon you an abundance of divine gifts, such as: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5, 22, 23). Because the Holy Ghost gives you so many heavenly gifts in baptism, He is the pledge of your glorious inheritance in heaven, and bestows upon you in baptism eternal salvation, as Christ says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16, 16); and as the Apostle testifies: "If we are children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8, 17). Thus the whole of heaven is included in your baptism and you are more than a royal child, you are a child of God.

My dear friend, have you ever thought of all these things? Have you ever from all your heart, thanked the Triune God for all the goodness He has shown unto you? You have now been confirmed. When you stood before the altar of your God, you publicly confessed

yourself to your baptismal covenant and with your own lips promised: "I renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways, and consecrate myself to Thee, Thou Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be true to Thee in faith and obedience, even unto the end." "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High" (Psalm 50, 14); for thus saith the Lord God: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God" (Psalm 50, 23).

Behold, this is the way over which you have passed. The goodness and mercy of God daily and abundantly manifested itself and beautifully adorned your path. My dear friend, when you remember this, fold your hands and say:

I'll praise my Maker whilst I've breath;
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures.

II.

The Journey's Aim.

WHEN a traveler sets out upon a journey, he must know something about the aim or end of his journey. My dear friend, do you know what is the aim and end of your journey?

To an old pious man there once came a youth with quick and hasty step. Full of happiness, he cried out: "Rejoice with me, my father! At last my uncle has given his consent. I shall now enter an advanced school and take up the study of law. Now my fortune is made!"

"Very well, my son," answered the old man, "now you will study faithfully. And yet—what then?"

"After three years I shall take my examinations and graduate from the school with honor and then take up the practice of my profession."

"And then?"

"Then I shall not be lacking in diligence and honesty. My reputation shall spread far and wide, and all people, high and low, will come to me and give me their confidence."

"And then?"

"Then I shall lay by something and become a wealthy man. I shall marry a worthy wife and set up my own household."

"And then?"

"Then I shall rear my children in the right way; they

shall be well trained and follow in the footsteps of their father."

"And then?"

"Then I shall retire from business; I shall be happy over the success of my children, enjoy their love and spend my age in happiness."

"And then?"

"Then?—Why—one can't live on this earth forever, and even if one could it would not be good,—then, of course, I shall have to die."

"*And then?*" cried the old man again, seizing both his hands and looking deeply into his eyes

"My son, **and then?**"

The youth turned pale and began to tremble, while the tears gushed from his eyes. "Thank you, my father," he said at last, "I had forgotten the most important matter, that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that is judgment. But from to-day I shall not again do so."

My dear friend, do you know what is the end of your journey? Have you ever prayed: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am?" (Psalm 39, 4).

You are, it is true, still hale and hearthy, full of the vigor and strength, the courage and the hope of joyous youth. Perhaps you have never thought of death, my dear young friend. You may have thought of what you wish to be some day, and how you expect to pass through life. But have you ever thought of the end, my friend? This is not a sad and gloomy thought, fit only for a hoary head. It is an earnest thought, well becoming a child.

Some time you must die, dear friend. The day will come when your eyes will be closed to the light of the sun, when your ears will no longer hear and your breath will cease. White, and stiff, and cold, you will lie in

your coffin. You will be borne out to the silent graveyard. You will be let down into the deep, dark grave, there to sleep the last long, silent sleep of death.

But the grave is not the final end of man, my dear friend. Well would it be for many a wretched one if it were. All distress and pain, all sorrow and woe would then be ended forever. But there shall come a day—when, we know not—but the day shall and must come. Then the trumpet of God shall sound from heaven and the Son of Man shall come in power and glory, and all His holy angels with Him. Then all the dead shall rise, young and old, rich and poor, all, all. They shall come forth from their graves—and you will be among them. They shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ—and you with them. Then you will stand before the Judge of the quick and the dead. Your whole life, every day and every hour of your life, shall then be revealed like an open book before Him, whose eyes are like a flaming fire, and He will read therein every deed which you have done, every word which you have spoken, yea every thought of your heart shall be uncovered and revealed And He shall judge you.

However, even the throne upon which the Judge of the quick and dead is seated, is not the final end of man, my dear friend. Then shall be said: heaven or hell, eternal salvation or eternal damnation. This is the final, the very last end of man. The righteous shall enter into eternal life. They shall be with their God and Savior eternally, and shall rejoice with unspeakable and glorious joy. But the wicked shall enter into eternal punishment, where the smoke of their torment shall ascend eternally and where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.

This, my dear friend, is the last, the very last end

of man. Think of this end to-day and always, and pray to God:

There let me be, my God, I pray,
Where a thousand years are like one day.
Keep me from thence, I ask with tears,
Where one day is like a thousand years.

III.

The Two Ways.

T depends upon you entirely, my dear friend, whither you shall go and what shall be your final destiny.

As thou believest, so wilt thou live;
The life thou livest, the end will give.
Then thou departest as thou hast died,
Whither thou goest, thou must abide.

Two ways lie before you. The one leads to heaven and eternal salvation, the other leads to hell and eternal damnation. Your Saviour has said concerning these two ways: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it (Matt. 7, 13, 14).

The Broad Way.

It looks very beautiful and attractive. There are many pleasures and amusements; the way is smooth and even, and all the children of this world go along upon it with a light and cheerful heart. Here is plenty to gratify the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of the heart. Here are found the frivolous and gay. They seek only after the things which afford them

pleasure and amusement, and live according to the desires of their hearts. The word of God does not terrify them, their conscience does not warn and admonish them. They do the works of the flesh, such as: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like" (Gal. 5, 19-21). They are "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3, 18, 19). My dear friend, they will call and invite you also to go with them upon this way. They will promise you great honor and much pleasure if you will go with them. They will ridicule you and scoff at you if you will not follow them.

The adversary also, "who walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet 5, 8), will tempt you, desiring to destroy you. He will make sin appear sweet and attractive to you. He will seek to lull to sleep your heart and conscience. He will not cease from setting snare upon snare for you. He will entice and seduce you to every sin and shame. Sometimes he will make you hopeless and discouraged, and again secure and careless. He will search out all your evil habits, your lusts and cares, your whole heart, and until your last breath will attack you on your weakest side.

And your own heart, my dear friend, will stand in league with the world and Satan. You will persuade yourself that this or that is yet far from being a sin. You will convince yourself that this or that sin is not so very serious. You will endeavor to excuse yourself by saying that one need not be too particular about the observance of the Word of God; that you are still young and desire to enjoy life. Beware of your own heart!

Alas! what hourly dangers rise
What snares beset thy way!
Keep open then, and bright thine eyes,
And hourly watch and pray.

Shun thou the broad and even way,
And bid the tempter flee,
Who ever seeks to make thee stray,
To take thy crown from thee.

Whene'er temptations fright thy heart,
Or lure thy feet aside,
May God His powerful aid impart,
Be Guardian sure, and Guide.

My dear friend, beware of the broad way which leads to damnation. Be not deceived because so many walk upon it. Be not deceived though your friends, your relatives and acquaintances, or even your parents, your brothers and sisters were to walk upon it. Be not deceived though it appear well with them and they live in pleasure and gaiety every day. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6, 7, 8). Beware of this way! Its honor is a shadow, its possessions are dust and ashes, its glory is as the flower of grass, its end is death, the eternal death.

The Narrow Way.

This, at first view, does not appear at all beautiful and attractive. The road is rough and uneven, overgrown with thorns, and one must make many sore and difficult steps upon it. There is much anguish, care and sorrow, much hatred and scorn to be suffered and endured upon it. There is much "fear and trembling" (Phil. 2, 12), there are many evil and cruel foes. And

how serious are its demands and exactions! It is enjoined: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5, 48). "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1, 15). It is there demanded: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3, 2). The Lord there says: "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8, 34). And few there be that find this way and walk upon it. And these few how often they are despised and mocked, poor and rejected in the sight of the children of this world! And yet they go their way in peace and joy. This world is too poor for them, they seek one to come. The pleasures of this world are too mean for them, they seek their delight in God. The possessions of this earth are too vain, they seek the eternal, the imperishable treasures. Christ, the Lord, their faithful Savior, goes on before them.

My dear friend, the Savior calls and entreats you to walk upon this way. He promises you every good thing, grace, peace and joy, if you will remain upon it. Satan indeed, would entice you away from it. The children of this world will scorn you and mock at you, if you remain upon this way and walk in it. It will be a sore thing for your flesh and blood if you remain upon it. But blessed are you, if you will persevere until the end! The Savior will lead and guide you. He will help you to stand fast in every conflict and strife, and to gain the victory. He will strengthen you when you are tired and weary; He will feed and refresh you when you are hungry and thirsty; He will comfort you when you are troubled and filled with fear; He will make every yoke easy, every bitterness sweet, and every burden light. Blessed are you if you will persevere until the end! He will guide you to a glorious and blessed goal. He

will guide you to where "at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16, 11).

My friend, my dear friend, think about these two ways very earnestly. Which way will you go? By holy baptism you have become a child of God, the own of Jesus Christ, a temple of the Holy Ghost. The Lord bless you "that you may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called" (Eph. 4, 1). Before His altar you have promised your Lord and Savior that you would be true to Him until the end in your faith and obedience to Him. Your parents and teachers and the holy angels of God have heard your profession and promise. Will you grieve them by your unfaithfulness? Your Savior Jesus Christ has heard your profession and now He, Who purchased you so dearly; He, Who cared for you so much that He gave even His life into death for you; He, Who as the Good Shepherd loves you as His lamb—He has heard you. Will you break the covenant, which you made with Him for all time? Upon making this covenant you received the Lord's supper to the forgiveness of sins, to the new life in God and to eternal salvation. Will you now go the way of sin, will you choose death for life, will you seek eternal damnation instead of salvation! Oh, my dear friend, I beseech you, I admonish, I adjure you; beware of the broad way, which leads to damnation? Seek the narrow way, which leads to eternal life! Say to your Savior:

My God, accept my heart this day,
And make it always Thine,
That I from Thee no more may stray,
No more from Thee decline.

Before the Cross of Him who died,
Behold, I prostrate fall;
Let every sin be crucified,
Let Christ be all in all.

Anoint me with Thy heavenly grace,
  Adopt me for Thine own;
That I may see Thy glorious face,
  And worship at Thy throne.

May the dear blood once shed for me,
  My blest atonement prove.
That I from first to last may be
  The purchase of Thy love!

Let every thought, and work, and word,
  To Thee be ever given;
Then life shall be Thy service, Lord,
  And death the gate of heaven.

IV.

The Choice.

ELL, then, my dear friend, you have determined to remain with your Savior. You say: Far be it from me, that I should leave the Lord my God! God bless you, my dear friend. There is joy with the angels of God over you. Your Savior says to you: "One thing is needful; and you have chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from you" (Luke 10, 42). But do not forget: The gate is strait and narrow is the way. The Lord Jesus has said: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13, 24).

It is not easy to remain ever on the narrow way. And yet it is written: "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24, 13). It is hard, very hard to endure and to persevere unto the end. To-day you think that you shall and must succeed. Ah, my dear friend, you do not yet know the world and life, nor your own heart. One day follows upon another, the years come and go. Your life grows less, your desires daily increase. The joys and pleasures of this life entice you more and more; the cares of this world ever more entangle you. The archenemy and the

children of this world will ever more zealously try their power and their cunning upon you. But, I, my dear friend, would give you a few wise counsels upon the way. If you will follow them all, it will be easy for you in all conflict and strife, to remain upon the narrow way and to endure.

"Keep that which is committed to thy trust."

St. Paul thus writes to Timothy (1 Tim. 6, 20), and admonishes his young friend to remain steadfast in the pure doctrines of the Word of God. How earnest he was in this admonition you can see from the fact that he afterwards twice repeats it. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus That good thing which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (2 Tim. 1, 13, 14). And again: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (2 Tim. 3, 14). I also, my dear friend, beseech and admonish you to remain steadfast in the pure doctrines, which were entrusted to you especially during your catechetical instruction. You publicly and solemnly promised on the day of your confirmation that you would be true to them even unto death, and you besought help and strength from God when you sang:

Be this the purpose of my soul.
My solemn, my determined choice,
To yield to His supreme control,
And in His kind commands rejoice.

Oh, may I never faint nor tire,
Nor, wand'ring, leave His sacred ways:
Great God! accept my soul's desire,
And give me strength to live Thy praise.

Be true then to these doctrines and to your church, which in her faith and doctrines, is founded upon them. In your future life many will try to draw you away from the pure teachings of the Word of God and from your church, in order to win you for their church. Especially will this be the case in our country, which has been called "the land of sects." But do not believe them, do not trust nor follow them. When they say to you: Not so much depends upon what a man believes, but what a man does and how he lives is the important thing; answer: Pure faith and pure doctrine are the conditions of salvation, as Christ says: "If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8, 31, 32). When they assert that only those things in the Word of God are true, which agree with human reason, answer them: Every doctrine is false and unconditionally to be rejected, which does not agree with the Holy Scriptures. Thus it is written: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1, 8). And when they pretend that their doctrines and practices more surely lead to salvation than those of your church, answer: Never will I leave that church, which, like no other, rests upon the eternal foundation of the Word of God; but I will be on my guard and prove all false teachers, as the Word of God enjoins: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4, 1).

Therefore, my dear friend, shun such seducers as much as you can (Titus 3, 10). Follow the admonition of the Apostle: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their con-

versation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever" (Heb. 13, 7, 8). But should they in spite of all, by their deceits succeed in confusing your conscience and in disturbing you with respect to the doctrines and confessions of your church, go to your pastor frankly and confidently, who will ever stand ready in all kindness and with all care, to offer you wholesome instruction and to strengthen your faith. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Heb. 13, 9), "but build up yourselves on your most holy faith" (Jude 20). "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3, 11).

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."

What a blessed day our dear Sunday is! On this day God began His creation and said: "Let there be light!" On this day our Lord Jesus arose from the dead. On this day the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the first congregation of Christians. The day reminds you of Creation, Redemption and Sanctification, the three chief articles of our Christian faith. And it is God's desire to continue to bless you on this day by His grace and mercy. The Sunday is not a burden but a source of benefit to poor man. Thus said a pious man: "Life without Sunday is an endless journey through a desert without a single lodging." You wear yourself out in work throughout the days of the week and eat your bread in the sweat of your brow, whether you labor with the plow, the mechanic's tools, or the pen. The six days have made you weary and tired, therefore God has appointed for you a day of rest and quiet devotion. Nothing but work from one day to the other would never be good. All week long you can think of your work and your daily bread. But

The constant thought of work and food
Prevents the thought of God, the Good.

You may sometimes lose sight and thought of God during the six days of the week, but every Sunday you realize that there is One above you Who must give His blessing to all work. During the six days you have ample opportunity to learn that our poor life is "labor and sorrow." Sunday is a reminder that there is yet another, a blessed and glorious life, where you shall have an eternal Sabbath before the throne of God. It reminds you of the promise: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4, 9), and is the pledge of that rest. The dear Sunday is the day of joy and of blessing.

It is true that thousands upon thousands of so-called christians care nothing at all for this joy and blessing. Many a one sits in his shop and many a one works out in the field to finish this or that. And this is sacreligiously called a work of necessity. But the saying remains true: "The earnings of Sunday will be lost on Monday;" and: "What is stolen from God the devil quickly takes again." How many sins are committed on this holy day, how much blasphemous talk is engaged in, how many filthy songs are sung! How much gluttony and drunkenness, dancing and gambling, disputes, strife and broil! Sunday has indeed become a day of sin. This is very sad and deplorable, my dear friend, but it is true. Therefore I beseech you, do not convert the Sunday into a day of labor, neither make it a day of sin. Hallow the day in your church, in your home, and in your heart.

When the church bells ring, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Do not sit down to work. You can have no good conscience nor any real blessing from it. Array yourself in your holiday garments in honor of your God and of His holiday. Go to the house of God and on the way remember the words: "Keep thy

foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear" (Eccles. 5, 1). Pray and sing with the congregation in joyous faith and listen to the Word of your God in true devotion. You have to deal here not with the preacher, but with the Savior, Who has said: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me" (Luke 10, 16). When you have heard the sermon and received the benediction of your God, thank Him for His precious Word and Gospel. Keep and preserve the Word in your heart. God's Word must be honored, heard, learned and done.

Such a celebration of Sunday must become a sweet and holy custom with you. There must be no peace for you unless you have celebrated the day of your God with the congregation. Thus the sons of Korah sang: "For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holy day" Psalm 42, 4). King David also said: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalms 27, 4). As Anna "who departed not from the temple" (Luke 2, 37), and like the first christians who "continued daily with one accord in the temple, praising God in singleness of heart" (Acts 2, 46, 47), so may you be. Let nothing prevent you from thus serving God as long as you can and whenever you can. When people say to you: You can serve God elsewhere as well as in church, answer: O yes, but whoever delights in the service of God delights also in going to the place where His honor dwelleth. When they say: Church-going does not make men blessed, answer: True, but not going to church condemns. When they say: Many

go to church and do not live up to what they hear, answer: Indeed, but—"Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11, 28).

Hallow the Sabbath in your home as well. To hear the word of God in the morning and in the afternoon do what God's word forbids; to sit with the praying congregation in the morning and in the afternoon perhaps in drunken company; to sing holy hymns in the morning and filthy songs in the evening; to hold the hymn book in your hand in the morning and the playing cards in the afternoon; to drink of the cup of the Lord in the morning and quaff the devil's cup at night; these things can never, never be harmonized. "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils (1 Cor. 10, 21). God says: "Behold I will spread dung upon your faces, even the dung of your solemn feasts; and one shall take you away with it" (Mal. 2, 3). Bible and hymn book, these must be your Sunday instruments; reading and praying, hearing and singing, comforting and doing charity, these must be your Sunday employments; then will the day of the Lord be a day of blessing for your home.

What, no pleasure, no recreation at all? Ah, pleasure enough! Hallow the Sabbath in your heart It is your privilege that with the multitude of christians you can "go up to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise." It is your privilege that on this day you can lay down your sacrifice upon the altar, as the Apostle says: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. 16, 2). You can experience yourself therefore, that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20, 35), for with your offerings you are helping to build up the kingdom of God by home and foreign missions.

And it in the Sunday school or in the service for the young, you refresh your memory of what you have learned and add new knowledge to your store; or if you remember with your comfort and assistance the widows, and orphans, and the sick (James 1, 27), surely that will be a refreshing and joyful Sunday, and you will not need further recreation. The blessing of such a Sunday will be with you all through the week.

Hold Your Bible in Honor.

The Bible is not only a textbook for the school, it is the book for your whole life. The Bible is the Word of God. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1, 21). To this hold fast, and do not permit any mockery, nor any speech, and be it seemingly ever so wise, to disturb you. No human wisdom or knowledge can ever equal it, and no power on earth can ever undo it. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24, 35). No word can teach and admonish with such penetration as the Word of God. No other word can so move and terrify. And there is no word which can so beautifully comfort and strengthen, as the dear word of God. For it has proven this power upon millions upon millions of Christian hearts. The wisest and most learned, the most pious and best of men have clung to this word and have experienced its power, have walked in its light and finally found a happy end through it.

You also can and will experience the power and blessing of this Word in your own heart. Therefore read the Bible diligently. The Lord Jesus said: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5, 39). Read it every day and you will receive a rich and

glorious blessing for each day. Especially on Sundays read it. Before all read the New Testament. You may first read the Gospels and the Book of Acts. Then read the Epistles of the holy apostles. But you should also read the Old Testament, the books of Moses and the Prophets. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17).

But you must read the Bible with true devotion. Pray before reading, that the Lord may open your heart, as he opened the heart of Lydia (Acts 16, 14). If you have not yet asked for this you need not wonder that you have read the Bible thousands of times and yet not experienced its power and blessing. Pray after your reading that God may bless His holy Word upon your heart. "A good prayer is half the study," Luther once said, and this is true also of the reading of the Bible. Do not despair if there be something which you do not at once understand. Ask advice of your pastor, or some experienced, pious christian. And if you cannot do this, just read on. The Lord himself, in His good time, will ever the more and more open and make plain to you the Scriptures, if you will only diligently pray and search.

Keep and preserve the Word of God in your heart that it may ever be "a lamp unto thy feet and a light upon thy path" (Psalm 119, 105). If it has reproved you, take the reproof to heart. If it has instructed you, do not forget what you have learned. If it has comforted you, keep this comfort. The more you do this, the richer will you be blessed thereby, for the deeper you penetrate, the more water you will find, water of salvation, which flows unto eternal life.

Follow the Word of your God and you will not err upon the way:

With God in your heart, His Word in your hand,
Well shall you fare on water and land.

But you have in hand besides "the little Bible"—your catechism. Do not think that you no longer need it. Next to the Bible Luther's Smaller Catechism is perhaps the best book in Christendom, for it contains the Gospel so pure and concise, that even the simplest may understand it. Happy is he who nourishes his soul with it and clings to it. Therefore, my dear friend, do not lay it aside. Study on and you will never finish studying it, for the more you study and understand it, the better will you know and understand the Word of God Dr. Luther once asked his young son: "What have you learned?" His son answered: "The whole catechism." Then said Luther: "If you have learned the whole catechism, you have learned more than I. For though I am an old doctor, yet must I chew and suck upon it every day. I read it word for word in the morning, and whenever I have time, the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and yet I cannot stand an examination upon it, such as I would like, and must remain a student of the catechism and gladly remain such." Therefore, my dear friend, I say, do not forget your catechism. A small key can unlock a great door. This little book can even more and more open and unlock to you the whole Word of God.

Be Constant in Prayer.

Prayer should be the christian's business. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5, 17). May it be your business. You cannot always go to the house of God and you cannot ever be reading your Bible. But you can always pray, and if you cannot frame words, you can groan and your groaning will not be hidden before God, as it is written: "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is

not hid from thee" (Psalm 38, 9). Prayer in the Name of Jesus has a grand promise. "Ask, and it shall be given you," says our Savior in Matt. 7, 7; and again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16, 23, 24). It was for this reason that a certain pious man, when asked what a christian needs in order to be happy, could answer: "Three things. Namely: Prayer, and again prayer, and finally prayer."

You also, my dear friend, have need of prayer for you are a poor, weak being. You need blessing for your work, strength for your conflicts, protection in temptation comfort in sufferings, forgiveness for your sins, and peace for your end. Your God and Savior will give you all this out of His grace if you will but ask Him for it. He has given you the promise: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16, 23). Earnest prayer and sincere faith make mighty christians. What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11, 24), Prayer divided the Red Sea, brought water out of the rock and fire from heaven, caused the sun to stand still and the host of the enemy to be overthrown. Therefore the holy men of God have prayed in every time of need. Jacob prayed when he was afraid of his brother Esau; Moses, when the people wished to stone him; Joshua, when Israel had been worsted in battle; David, when he was in danger; the congregation at Jerusalem, when Peter was in prison, and Paul, when he lay in the dungeon at Philippi. You can pray anywhere and everywhere, in your home and in the field; in the kitchen or in the barn, in the closet or in the street. Jesus prayed upon a mountain and in the desert; Peter upon the housetop; Isaac in the field; Hezekiah upon his sick bed; Na-

thanael under the fig tree; Jonah in the belly of the fish and the thief upon the cross.

It is a holy and precious privilege, which God has given you, that you can come to Him in every time of need and call upon Him. And He has given you the promise: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me" (Psalm 50, 15).

Especially in the morning, at noon and in the evening, remember to pray to your God and to call upon Him, as David says: "As for me, I *will* call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud" (Psalm 55, 16, 17). Thus also may you say. As the pious Daniel did, who fell upon his knees three times every day to pray and thank God (Dan. 6, 10), so also may you do.

If you discover that you are growing languid and disinclined to pray, do not wait until perhaps your desire shall return. This waiting comes from Satan. At once and cheerfully take up your prayer and the desire will soon return, and you will experience the grace of your God. But when you pray, pray humbly like your Savior, who in Gethsemane lay upon His face. With Abraham say: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Gen. 18, 27). Pray in the Name of Jesus, i. e., in faith in Him, and in the cheerful confidence, that the Lord will fulfill His promises. A prayer without devotion means bringing a sacrifice to Satan. If you do not give attention to what you are praying, how can you expect the Lord your God to attend. If you are not devout He will say of you as He said of His people: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt 15, 8). Pray wisely, not only for earthly gifts and possessions, but before all for the one thing needful.

In the Lord's Prayer there is found but one petition for daily bread, all the others are for spiritual gifts and possessions. Ask then before all things, for the forgiveness of sins, for righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, for faith and obedience, for charity and hope, for truth and steadfastness, and especially for a blessed end. Let your prayer be:

My God, for Jesus' sake I pray
Thy peace may bless my dying day.

All is well that ends well. But also pray for others. Do not forget to pray for your parents, your brothers and sisters, for your friends and relatives, for pastors and teachers and those in authority. Pray for your enemies. A christian's business is to pray.

Receive the Lord's Supper Frequently.

The holy and highly to be revered sacrament of the altar is the most glorious miracle of the love of your God and Savior. It is the most precious pearl and the priceless jewel of the church. It is His most precious heritage, it is the fountain from which there is drawn infinite grace. Jesus instituted it that we should eat and drink of it. He never did and never commanded anything unnecessary. You should therefore use it because He has comanded and enjoined it. He instituted it for His remembrance. The very least you can do out of love for Him is, that you remember Him, and it is therefore a great and terrible sin of ungratefulness, if the holy sacrament be despised and neglected for any length of time. And if you had no other reason, go to the holy supper to honor and to praise your God, Who instituted it, and to thank your Savior, Who ordained it. And what great and glorious blessing has He not connected

with this sacrament! Everything the Lord Jesus merited, secured and acquired for you, when He gave His life into death for you, is ever offered you in this supper All His powers and gifts, all His sufferings and all His glory, the whole Jesus, your Savior and Redeemer, becomes yours, He yours and you His. It strengthens your faith, charity and hope, so that you can "do all things through Christ, which strengthens you" (Phil. 4, 13), Therefore, as Dr. Luther says, the command and promise of the Lord Jesus, as well as your own need, which presses upon you, should urge you, because on account of these things such command, inducement and promise have been made.

Do not imagine that the holy sacrament will lose anything of its solemnity and sacredness if it is frequently partaken of. You will have a blessing from it every time you partake of it in the right manner. You have good reasons to receive the sacrament: first, because thereby you thank and praise Christ, and secondly, because you receive grace and comfort. But suppose there is experienced no hunger and thirst after the holy supper in the heart? You are all the more needy. For that is indeed very distressing if you feel indifferent and cold toward the holy supper. Therefore go frequently to the table of your God and Savior, and you will abundantly experience grace and blessing in all your ways. Do not guide yourself by those who go to the Lord's table from mere habit, once or twice a year, or even less frequently. You must know best yourself when and how often you have need of it. The Savior and also the apostle Paul say: "As *oft* as ye eat and drink of it," to indicate that, it ought to be received often. Dr. Martin Luther says: "There is reason to fear that he despises the sacrament and is no christian, who does not seek and desire the sacrament at least four times a year; just as he is no

christian, who does not believe nor hear the Gospel." See to it also that you come worthily, that you may not receive the holy supper unto condemnation, but to the salvation of your soul. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eatheth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor. 11, 29). Before receiving it be humble and penitent, after receiving it be thankful and obedient, and be more cheerful in your faith, fight more boldly, and pray more fervently. May the Lord grant you His blessing.

Seek the Companionship of Sincere Christians.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1, 1). Mark well the Word of your God, my dear friend. You will meet with many men in your life. Some mock at the Word of God, others walk in the lust of the flesh. You will come in contact with drunkards and immoral persons, with liars and slanderers. You will have dealings with open and secret enemies of the cross of Jesus, with children of the world, with secure and proud persons. They will hold out and offer to you many advantages and enjoyments in your outward life, if you will join with them. Their words are very smooth and sweet, and the things they do are very pleasant for flesh and blood. And yet I say, depart from them. "Evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15, 33). One evil companion is the ruin of the other. If you go with them and associate with them, you will soon become the companion and sharer of their sin. Sincere faith will decrease in your heart, your love to God will grow cold, your conscience will be lulled to sleep and pious

habits will become burdensome to you. You will take pleasure in ways of sin and vice. You will waver, you will give way, you will stumble and fall, and perhaps be lost. Therefore, my dear friend, "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Prov. 1, 10). And though their words seem ever so wise, though they coax you ever so charmingly, and though they be ever so friendly toward you—do not consent, my dear friend. Shun most earnestly every person whom you see despising the church and the Word of God, neglecting prayer and the holy sacraments and going along on the ways of sin and the lust of the flesh. Do not choose any calling or position in life which must bring you into closer relations with such persons. It could easily happen that you too would be drawn into the service of Satan and of sin, and into despising God. But if in your business or position, you ever must have dealings with such people, be careful, watch and pray: "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6, 13).

Seek the companionship of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and cheerfully confess Him in word and deed. Associate yourself with those to whom the communion of saints, the holy christian church, is more than all human associations, who are pledged to holy faith, hold the Word of God in honor, and practice godliness and rectitude. Always remain in union with a congregation of your own dear Evangelical Lutheran Church. If there be a young men's or young women's association in it, join it. There is a great blessing in such associations. Many coals heaped together give a bright and cheerful fire, but a single coal soon goes out. "And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly brocken" (Eccles. 4, 12). In such christian associations you get new strength and power for your prayers and for your spiritual life; you will grow

in the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and of the Son of God; your heart will be fortified and comforted, and your "weak hands and feeble knees will be strengthened" (Job. 4, 3, 4). My dear friend, do not despise such holy and blessed associtaion.

But now we come to the most important thing. All your churchgoing and reading of the Bible, all your prayers and participation in the holy communion, all your association with pious christians are unavailing, if you have not and do not keep this one thing. This is truly the one thing needful for time and for eternity This one thing is:

Hold Fast to Your Lord Jesus Christ.

"And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2, 28). Take to heart this saying of the disciple, "who leaned on Jesus' breast" Abide in the Lord Jesus, your faithful Savior and Redeemer He is worthy of it. He is the only begotten Son of the Father. He is the brightness of His glory He is your Savior, your Redeemer. He died for you and shed His holy blood for you upon the tree of the cross. He has secured for you forgiveness of sins, life and eternal salvation. He has frequently knocked at the door of your heart in pleasure and in pain, in joy and in sorrow, in order to win you for His own. He followed you in all your ways, as the faithful shepherd follows his lost sheep, in order to seek and to save you. He loves you better than father or mother, better than any one else on earth ever could love you. He says to you: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jer. 31, 3). Though you be a poor and

sinful creature, in mercy He will receive you; only come to Him confidently. He is patient with you in all your weaknesses and failings, therefore be of good cheer. He cares for you in faithful love and in tender mercy; everything that you have need of, He gives you. He shows you so much grace, that nowhere could you have it better than with Him. He longs for you, you are His pride and His honor, His joy and the reward of His sufferings. He is the One, and there is no salvation to be found in any other in heaven or upon earth. He is waiting to give you the crown of life and the inheritance of the saints in light.

Abide in Him. My dear friend, abide in your faithful Savior and Redeemer. You promised it at His altar before God and man and before His holy angels. He heard your promise and accepted it. Abide in Him. Keep the covenant which you made with Him on the day of your confirmation. He is faithful to His covenant eternally. And if you should at any time forget Him, if you should forget your covenant—return again "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God" (Jer. 3, 12, 13). Return to your Savior in true repentance, sincere faith, and earnestness. Abide in your Savior and Redeemer. Without Him you can have no success, no joy, no comfort, no peace, no grace, no blessing, no hope, no salvation. Therefore abide in Him. In strife and conflict, in labor and trouble, in cross and want, in joy and sorrow, in suffering and pain, in life and death, abide in Him, that you may not be put to shame before Him at His coming.

Should wealth and honor be your portion in this life, be it known to you that earthly success and prosperity have frequently led men astray. They bestow their af-

fection on these things which are vain, and have thus forgotten their Savior. Be not found among these. Abide in Him "Who is rich unto all" (Rom. 10, 12). And if your life be in poverty and lowliness, what does it matter? And if your life be full of labor and worry, full of cross and care, that need not distress you. Though you leave behind you neither fields nor cattle, house nor land, do not grieve on account of it. Though you amass no money nor property, why should you care? Though you have no honor nor distinction before men, be content. Only abide in the Lord Jesus. Your life will still be precious. And on the last day He will place you at His right hand with the blessed of His Father, and you shall be with Him eternally.

Brief life is here our portion:
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life, is there.
O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest,
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest.

There glory yet unheard of
Shall shed abroad its ray,
Resolving all enigmas,
An endless Sabbath day.
There God, our King and Portion,
In fulness of His Grace,
Shall we behold forever,
And worship face to face!

Abide in your faithful Savior and Redeemer. Will you do it? Will you do it, my dear friend? O, that from your heart you might say: Yes, in the Name of God, of the Lord Jesus. Well, then, may the Triune God grant you His blessing thereto, and give to you and to me a cheerful "to will and to do." Amen.

The Apostles of our Lord.

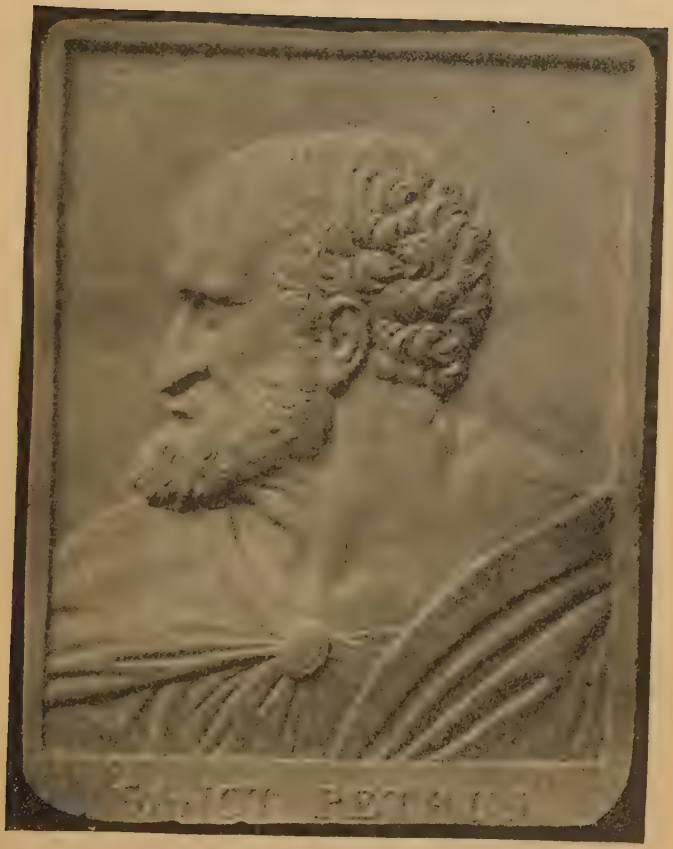
A Brief Description

of their

Lives and Labors.

Simon Peter.

AMONG the twelve disciples of Jesus, Peter is the most prominent. His name is generally placed at the head of the catalogs of the apostles. He was born at Bethsaida, in Galilee. His father's name was Jonas, an abbreviation of Joannes (John). He was brought to Jesus at the river Jordan, by his brother Andrew (John 1, 40-42). Jesus, Who knew the heart, saw at once what kind of a man this Simon was and what would become of him, and therefore gave him the name, Cephas (Petros, in Greek), i. e., a rock. After this meeting with Jesus, Peter returned to his calling, that of a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, and only occasionally came together with Him. It was not until nearly a year afterward that the Lord called Peter as a constant follower. This occurred in connection with that wonderful draught of fishes spoken of in Luke 5, 1-11, upon which occasion Peter, overwhelmed by the glory and grace of Jesus, in the feeling of his profound unworthiness, cast himself down at the feet of the Lord and cried out: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man." But the Lord answered him; "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." Then Peter forsook all and followed after Him. The most important circumstances during the period of his discipleship are given in the Gospels as follows: The great confession of Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," and the reply of Jesus wherewith



Simon Peter.

he was honored, Matt. 16, 13-19; his humiliation, because upon Christ's revelation of His coming sufferings he had cried out, "Lord, this shall not be unto thee," Matt. 16, 21-23; his repeated beautiful confession of faith, John 6, 66-69; his refusal at first to have his feet washed and final submission, John 13, 6-9; his wellmeant but overconfident exaltation of himself above the other disciples, when to the warning of the Lord he replied, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended, Matt. 26, 31-35; his weakness in Gethsemane, where he slept with the other disciples, Matt. 26, 36-45; his rash defence of Christ in Gethsemane, where he struck off the ear of Malchus, John 18, 10-11; finally his threefold denial of Jesus in the palace of the high priest and his bitter tears of repentance when Jesus turned to look upon him, Mark 14, 66-72. After the resurrection and the first appearances of the risen Lord, he had returned to Galilee and had again taken up his business as fisherman, when the Lord by a second wonderful draught of fishes revealed Himself to him, and proved the sincerity of his repentance by the threefold question: "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me," and by the command: "Feed my sheep." Jesus then reinstated him into his apostleship (John 21, 1-19). Peter was the spokesman in the little band of disciples and one of the three who stood in a nearer relation to the Lord. The Book of Acts shows how on the day of Pentecost and for some time after, he boldly bore testimony of Christ and suffered for His sake. He

remained in Jerusalem for a considerable time, for he was still at Jerusalem upon the occasion of the council of the apostles mentioned Acts 15. Later on he is said to have been in Pontus, Bithynia and in Rome. About the year 64 A. D., he suffered a martyr's death by crucifixion, and as it is said, upon his own request, with his head downward, because he did not deem himself worthy to be crucified in the same position as his Lord and Master. The best description of his character Peter has himself given in the first of his two epistles. He there shows us that in his trials of faith he has found Christ to be the Living Rock, and admonishes us to be watchful, pious and humble.

Andrew.

THIS apostle does not hold any position of prominence in the Holy Scriptures, nor is there anything particularly noteworthy related of him. He is especially remembered as the one who brought his brother Simon Peter to the Savior. Like Peter he was a fisherman. He had been a disciple of John the Baptist, and his attention had been directed to Jesus by John's words: "Behold the Lamb of God!" Thereupon Andrew and another disciple followed Jesus and upon His question: "What seek ye?" answered: "Rabbi, where dwellest thou?" The Lord answered: "Come and see," and they went with Him. Andrew recognized Jesus as the Messiah and hastened to lead his brother to Him, with the message: "We have found the Messiah" (John 1, 35-41). If this were all he had done, it would still be right to hold his name in honored memory. At the feeding of the 5,000 it is Andrew, who, trusting faithfully in the power of Jesus, calls attention to the boy with the loaves and fishes (John 6, 8-9). We find very little more in the Holy Scriptures about him. Nor do we learn much about him from tradition. When the apostles scattered, he is said to have gone to Scythia. He is reported to have died by crucifixion, like his brother Peter, at Patrae, in Achaia, Greece. The cross upon which he suffered death is said to have been constructed of two beams crossing each other at sharp angles in the form of the letter X, which form of cross is hence known as the cross of St. Andrew.

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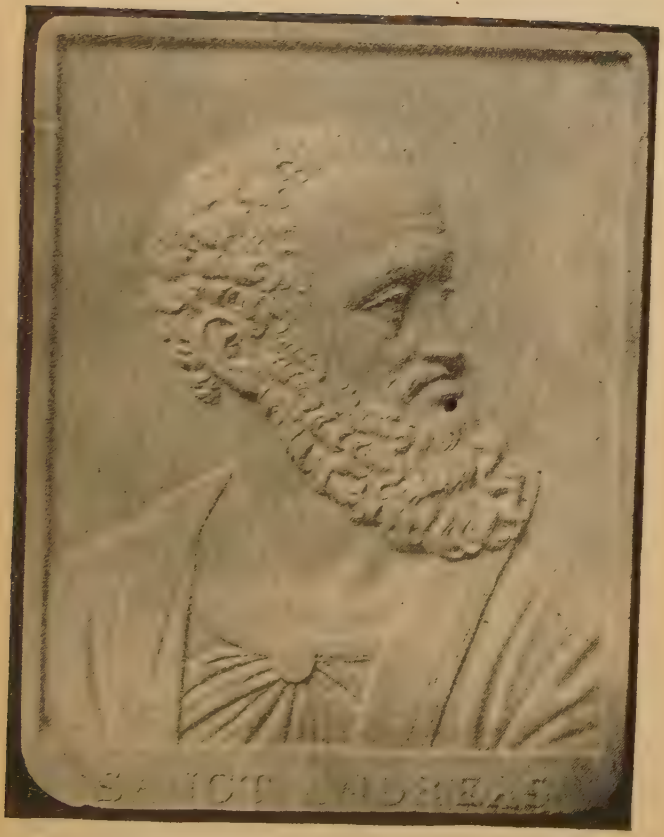


Andrew.

James, the Son of Zebedee.

THERE were two disciples by the name of James. The one named James, the son of Zebedee (Matt. 10, 2), was the brother of John. His mother was Salome, who by some scholars is believed to have been the sister of the mother of Jesus. The father of James was a fisherman and his sons assisted him at his work. While James also had known the Lord before, he became a constant follower of Jesus together with Peter, Andrew and John, only after the miraculous draught of fishes on the sea of Galilee. The occasions upon which he played a prominent part are few. His fiery zeal showed itself when he and John would have fire fall from heaven to destroy the Samaritan village, which refused to entertain the Lord. But Jesus restrained them (Luke 9, 51-56). The next time James is mentioned when his mother Salome asked the Lord for her sons, that He would grant them in His kingdom to sit, the one at His right and the other at His left (Matt. 20, 20-23). James was one of the three elect who beheld Jesus in His transfiguration (Matt. 17, 1-9); who witnessed the raising of the daughter of Jairus (Luke 8, 49-56), and whom Jesus took with Him into the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14, 33). After the day of Pentecost he held a high position in the church at Jerusalem, and when Herod persecuted the christians, he was one of the first victims. He was beheaded with the sword (Acts 12, 2). Thereby the prophecy of Christ (Matt. 20, 23) was fulfilled. James drank the cup and received the baptism of blood.

James, the Son of Zebedee.

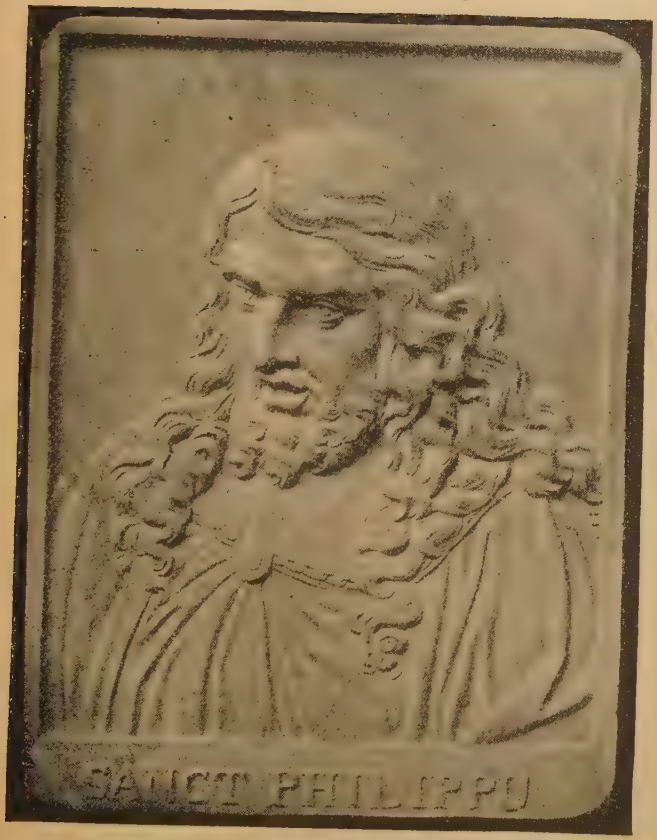
John.

JOHN was the younger brother of James. He is often described as the mildest and most tender of the apostles, yet his character shows great determination, as we learn from his writings. Most likely he was "the other" of the two disciples of John, who followed Jesus already at the Jordan (John 1, 37 et seq.) He was one of the most constant companions of Jesus, one of the three who formed the inner circle of the apostles, indeed he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 21, 20). During the holy supper he "leaned on his breast," and when Peter beckoned to him, asked Jesus, who it should be of whom He spake (John 13, 22-25). He followed his captive Master into the judgment hall of Caiaphas, and was a witness of what was there done (John 18, 15). He was present under the cross, when Jesus commended His mother to him with the words: "Behold, thy mother" (John 19, 25-27). On the morning of the resurrection together with Peter, he hastened to the sepulchre of the Lord and entered into the empty tomb, and saw the linen clothes lie (John 20, 3-6). When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the shores of the sea of Tiberias (John 21, 1-24), it was John who first recognized Him and cried out: "It is the Lord." After the day of Pentecost, John remained at Jerusalem for some time, probably until the death of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Afterwards he labored for a long time at Ephesus. During the reign of the emperor Domitian, between 90 and 100 A. D., he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelations. After the death of Domitian he returned to Ephesus, where he wrote the Gospel and the three epistles which bear his name. He is said to have become over 90 years of age and to have died a natural death about the year 100 A. D. In his age he had himself carried to the gatherings of the congregation and called to them these words: "Little children, love one another."

John.

Philip.

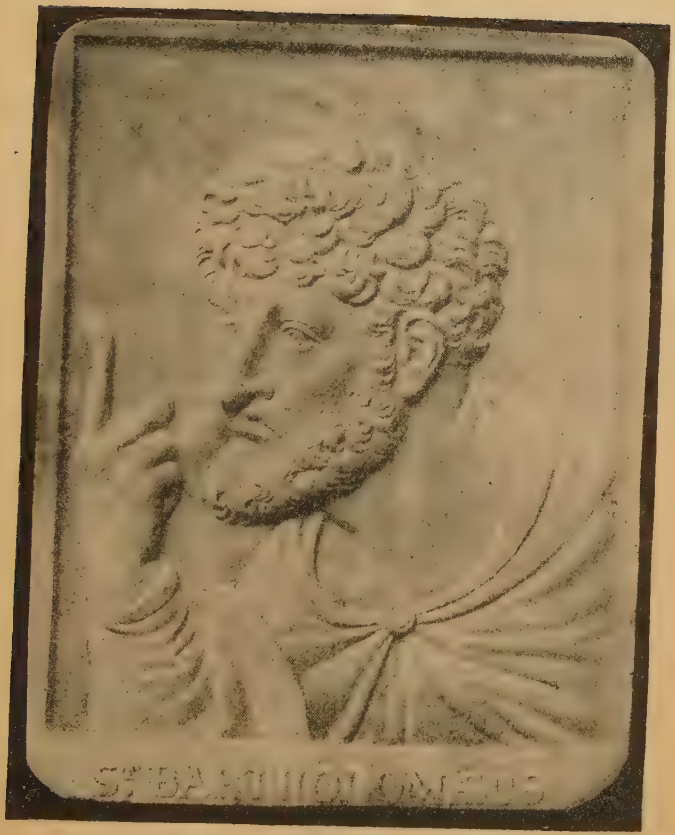
THE fifth of the apostles is Philip, of Bethsaida, a city on the western shore of the sea of Galilee. Jesus met him on the way from the Jordan into Galilee, on the day after He had met Andrew, and said to him: "Follow me." Philip sought Nathanael and brought him the message: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." When Nathanael took offense at the mention of the humble city of Nazareth and did not care to go, Philip said to him: "Come and see" (John 1, 43-46). At the feeding of the 5,000 when Jesus asked: "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" it was Philip who answered: "Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (John 6, 5-7). He took part in bringing to the Lord certain Greeks, who had expressed a desire to see Him (John 12, 20-22). During the holy supper, when Jesus said that He was going to His Father, it was Philip who asked: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," and was rebuked by Jesus with the words: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14, 8-9). The Philip mentioned in connection with the Ethiopian eunuch, whose conversion is reported in Acts 8, 26-40, is not the apostle but the deacon Philip of Jerusalem. According to tradition he went as missionary to Scythia and Hierapolis in Phrygia, where the inhabitants worshipped a huge serpent. When Philip drove out this serpent, the priests grew so enraged that they crucified him, and while he was hanging on the cross stoned him.



Philip.

Bartholomew.

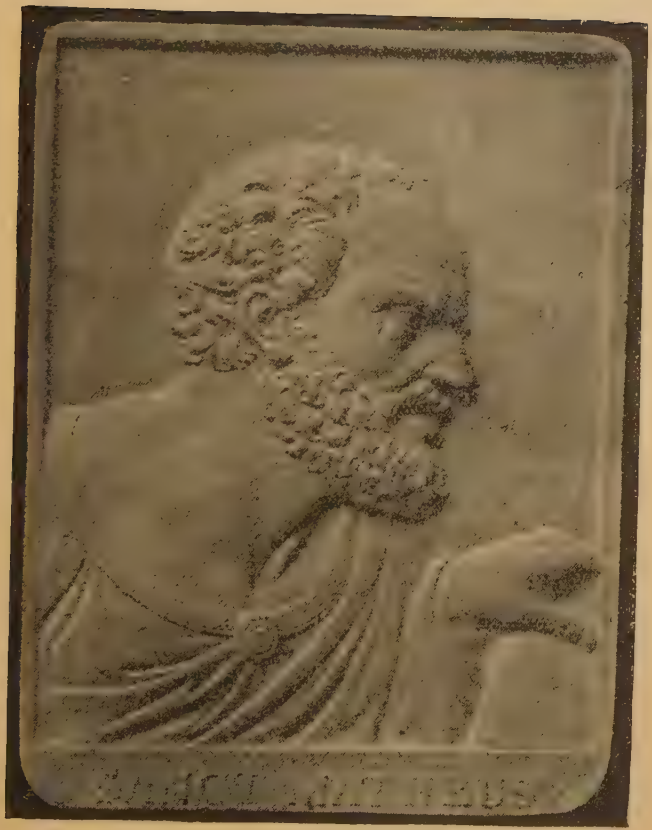
IT was supposed in early times already, that Bartholomew and Nathanael are identical. The first three Gospels do not mention Nathanael, and the fourth does not mention Bartholomew. In the catalogs of the apostles Bartholomew comes next to Philip, and St. John associates Nathanael with Philip, who brought him to Jesus. The name Bartholomew, or rather Bar Tolmai, shows him to have been the son of one Tolmai, while his actual name was Nathanael. When Nathanael heard of Jesus through Philip, he said: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But when he nevertheless came to Jesus, Jesus said of him: "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." And Nathanael was still more astonished than at this estimate of his character by one to whom he believed himself a stranger, when Jesus said: "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the figtree, I saw thee," and he confessed: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1, 45-51). There is nothing further of special importance related of him. He is mentioned as one of those who were witnesses of the last miraculous draught of fishes (John 21, 1-6), and his name is once mentioned in Acts 1, 13. The tradition which says that he carried the Gospel as far as India and was there scourged and crucified with his head downward, is entitled to no credence.



Bartholomew.

Matthew.

THIS apostle, whom is also given the name of Levi (Luke 5, 27-29), was the son of a man named Alphaeus. He was a publican and it was his duty to collect the taxes from the Jews for the Roman emperor. Jesus called him away from the toll. It was at Capernaum that Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of customs and said to him: "Follow me. And he arose and followed Him" (Matt. 9, 9). Luke relates that Levi, or Matthew, prepared a great feast to the Lord at which many of the publicans were present. And the Pharisees murmured because Jesus associated with publicans and sinners (Luke 5, 29-32). He is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament. According to tradition he traveled in Egypt and Ethiopia, where he is said to have preached for 23 years and to have performed many miracles. The oriental church (Greek Church), says that he died a natural death, while the western church (Roman Church), says that he suffered martyrdom. He is supposed to have been treacherously pierced through the back with a sword, while kneeling in prayer, at the command of King Hirtacus, at Naddaver in Ethiopia. He is the author of the first Gospel, which has been named after him.



Matthew.

Thomas.

THOMAS is called Didymus, i. e., the twin, in the Gospel of St. John (11, 16). In the catalogs of the apostles he always comes next to Matthew, and then follows James, the son of Alphaeus. Since Matthew is also called a son of Alphaeus, and Thomas signifies "a twin," it has been thought by some that he was the twin brother of Matthew and that James was the stepbrother of both. We know nothing about his first meeting with Jesus. When Jesus was about to go into Judaea to raise Lazarus from the dead and His disciples in vain endeavored to restrain Him, because He would there expose Himself to the danger of death, Thomas cried out: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him" (John 11, 16). He is best known because of his attitude after the resurrection of our Lord. When Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of the first Easter day, Thomas was not with them, and when they told him that Jesus had risen, he refused to believe them. One week later Jesus again appeared to His disciples and shamed Thomas, who now said: "My Lord and my God" (John 20, 24-29). According to tradition he preached the Gospel in India, where a congregation of "Thomas Christians" is found on the coast of Malabar. His martyrdom is said to have been accomplished by means of a lance.

Thomas.

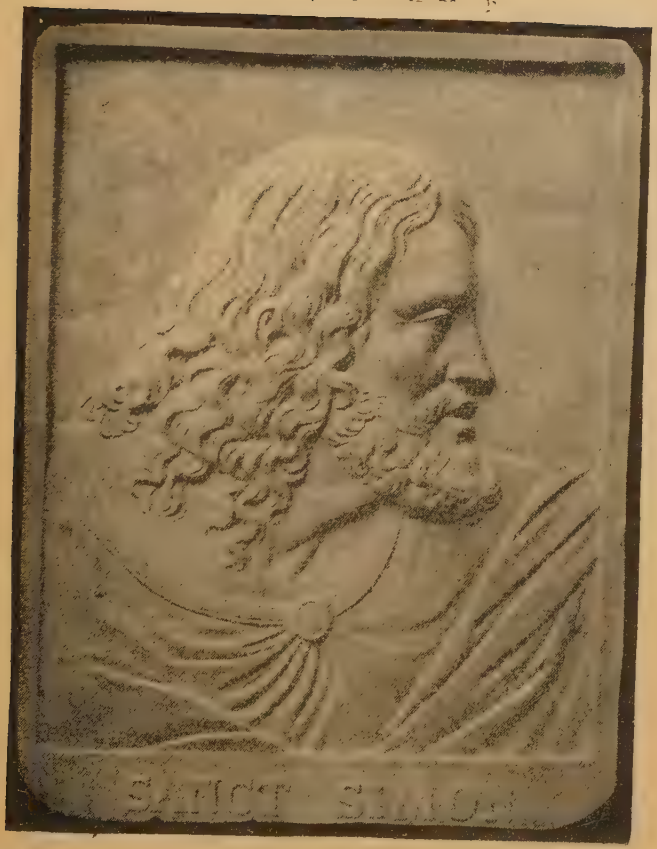
James, the Less.

THE only certain information which the Holy Scriptures give us concerning this apostle is, that he was the son of Alphaeus (Matt. 10, 3), who was also called Cleophas (John 19, 25); that his mother's name was Mary and his brother's name Joses (Mark 15, 40). He is called "the Less," in this latter passage, probably because he was small of stature. The name James occurs several times in the New Testament and it is quite difficult to determine whether one or several persons are to be designated. One view is, that James and Joses were the sons of Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, who accordingly must also have born the name of Alphaeus, by a former marriage, and that they were therefore the halfbrothers of Jesus. But by this view James the apostle would have to be identified with James, the Just, mentioned in Acts 15, 13 et seq., which cannot be done. Others are of the opinion that Mary, the mother of James, was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and that he was accordingly a cousin of Christ. But it is not probable that two sisters should have born the same name. Tradition says that he labored in southwestern Palestine and Egypt and that he was crucified at Ostrakine in lower Egypt.

James, the Less.

Simon, the Canaanite.

HE is the tenth in the catalog of the apostles. Luke calls him "Zelotes" (6, 15), which signifies "a zealot." This may have been descriptive of his character, or it may have characterized him as a former member of a very strict sect among the Jews, called "Zelotes," who favored the most stringent observance of the Mosaic law. Nothing is told about Simon in the Gospels. Certain traditions state that he died a martyr's death by crucifixion and the place is given as Suanir, in Persia. He is reported to have brought the Gospel to England by others and to have been crucified there. But there is no credence to be placed in these stories.



Simon, the Canaanite.

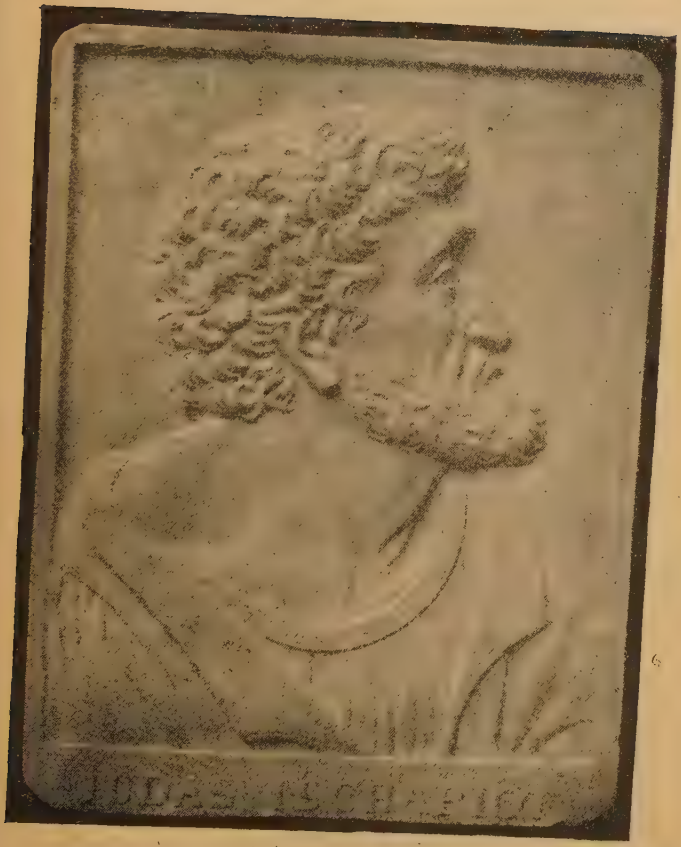
Judas, the Brother of James.

THIS apostle is called by St. Matthew "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus (10, 3), by St. Mark, Thaddaeus (3, 18), and by St. Luke, the brother of James (6, 16). Judas was his real name and he was a (son) of a certain James. Thaddaeus and Lebbaeus are synonymous surnames meaning "the favorite." To distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, he is never called by the name Judas alone in the New Testament. We learn very little about his character and acts from the Gospels and from Acts. Church tradition does not report with certainty, where he preached or whether he died a natural death or the death of a martyr. According to some he labored in Persia and Assyria.

Judas, the Brother of James.

Judas, Iscariot.

THIS apostle is always named last in the catalogs of the apostles, and then with the words: "who also betrayed him (Jesus)." The name Iscariot indicates the place of his birth, the city of Carioth in Judah. All the other apostles were from Galilee. His father's name was Simon. That Jesus received him into the number of the apostles is an indication of the gifts and powers, which would have become valuable for the kingdom of God, if he had permitted himself to be sanctified by Christ. The character of Judas was shown at Bethany. When Mary had anointed Jesus, he asked: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" The Evangelist adds: "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein" (John 12, 4-6). Later he went to the priests and asked them: "What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (Matt. 26, 14-16). And for thirty pieces of silver he shamefully betrayed his Master. The warnings which the Lord had given him during the holy supper were in vain (John 13, 21-30). Satan had entered into him, and as Jesus arose from the soul-struggle in Gethsemane, Judas advanced with a band of servants of the chief council and betrayed Him with a kiss (Matt. 26, 47-50). But when Jesus had been condemned to death, he regretted his deed and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the priests and said: "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood" (Matt. 27, 4). But it was no sorrow unto repentance, therefore despair seized him and he went and hung himself (Acts 1-18).



Judas, Iscariot.

Paul.

ALTHOUGH called last, Paul ranks first among the apostles. He was born at Tarsus and brought up in the law at Jerusalem. His teacher was the famous Gamaliel. He also was a Roman citizen. As Saul he was very zealous for the law and persecuted the christians until, on the road near Damascus, Jesus revealed himself unto him in a light from heaven and called to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9, 1-6). By this experience Paul became another man, and from that time forth he became a chosen vessel of the Lord to testify of Him among the Gentiles (Acts 9, 7-16). At first he remained for a time in Arabia, then he labored in Jerusalem and Antioch and other places. He made three great missionary journeys. The first began at Antioch and led through Syria to Cyprus, Perga, Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe and back. The second was through Asia Minor to Galatia and Troas to Europe. There were visited Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Athens, Corinth and Cenchrea. Then Ephesus, Cæsarea and back to Jerusalem. On the third journey Paul again proceeded through Asia Minor to Ephesus, Troas, Macedonia and Greece, then across the Aegean sea to Jerusalem. There he was seized and for two years was a prisoner at Cæsarea. At last upon appealing to Cæsar, he was sent to Rome. In Rome he was in easy imprisonment for a short time. According to the opinion of many, he once more obtained his freedom and made one more missionary journey upon which he is said to have come as far as Spain. He was beheaded with the sword under the emperor Nero about 64 A. D. He is the author of thirteen of the New Testament epistles.

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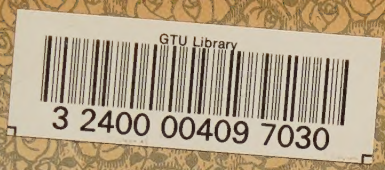

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